

**REQUEST FOR MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN TEXAS
CENTRAL PARTNERS AND THE HOUSTON-GALVESTON METROPOLITAN
PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

Summary

High Speed Rail Project, also known as “The Texas Bullet Train”, is designed to travel up to 200 miles per hour between Houston and Dallas with a 90-minute travel time. Departures are expected every thirty minutes and there will be an intermediate stop in College Station. Currently, the project is undergoing final review in its Draft Environmental Impact Statement by the Federal Railway Administration with an Environmental Impact Statement expected for release in 2019. Texas Central and its partners are currently working to secure a Final Environmental Impact Statement from the Federal Railroad Administration in 2019 leading to construction. The estimated \$18 billion privately-developed project will generate new jobs, local community tax revenue, significant economic development and a flexible alternative to meet the state’s growing transportation demands.

Texas Central Partners, LLC has requested a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with H-GAC regarding the project (see attached letter). A MOU with Texas Central Partners could express the interest of both parties in coordinating planning activities related to the deployment of high speed rail service to Houston. The MOU would not, however, require either party to make specific expenditures. Texas Central has also explicitly stated its will not seek federal or state funding for the deployment of their project.

As with other private (or public) investments generating significant trips to and from our area, it is desirable to understand how Texas Central patrons will to travel to and from the Houston terminus. The Gulf Coast Rail District and the City of Houston have both executed MOUs with Texas Central (see attached).

Action Requested

Recommendation of the TPC’s approval of the Memorandum of Understanding between Texas Central Partners, LLC. and the Houston-Galveston Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Attachment
**Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Texas
Central's Delivery of High-Speed Train Service between
The Greater Houston Region and North Texas**

Whereas, the undersigned share a commitment to creating and leveraging public and private resources to enhance the mobility of travelers in Texas; and,

Whereas, growing populations within the two largest metro areas in Texas are served by expansive transportation networks including extensive transit networks and world-class tolled and non-tolled highway facilities; and,

Whereas, the Houston Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for transportation planning in the eight-county Houston-Galveston area and H-GAC's Transportation Policy Council approves the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP); and,

Whereas, the RTP identifies the Region's mobility goals and policies over the next 25 year, and the RTP sets the policy and funding framework for the Region's modally-balanced transportation system and the identification of transportation facilities and services needed to support the Region's anticipated growth using available resources; and,

Whereas, strong economic growth and projected population increases, combined with widespread local political support for investment in public-use infrastructure, provide an optimal environment for the development of high-speed passenger train service and complementary systems in Texas; and,

Whereas, Texas Central Rail Holdings, LLC and its affiliates (Texas Central), a Texas-based passenger railroad, have spent significant private capital on the validation and the development of a high-speed passenger train system that will connect the H-GAC region and North Texas; and,

Whereas, Texas Central is developing an investor-owned high-speed passenger train system on which it will deploy the Tokaido Shinkansen total system to connect North Texas, the Brazos Valley, and the H-GAC region and for which it will not accept public grants; and

Whereas, close coordination among the undersigned is required to maximize the opportunities for connectivity for the benefit of generations of Texans.

Now, therefore, be it hereby resolved that the undersigned parties:

1. Affirm that developing safe, dependable and interconnected passenger train, rail and other transit systems is in the best interest of the travelling public in part because of high-speed train systems' safety, reliability, air quality improvement, and efficient use of land which fosters urban densification and economic development.
2. Affirm that plans to enhance passenger and freight mobility must take into account the increased demands for freight and passenger travel from future population and economic growth.
3. Will, through close coordination and planning, prioritize the preservation and maximization of existing critical infrastructure corridors.
4. Will, to the extent feasible and practical, coordinate the siting and planning of facilities to accommodate interconnectivity of high-speed passenger stations and public transit facilities.
5. Plan to incorporate high-speed rail in regional transportation planning.
6. Agree that in the pursuit of public funds, public entities will not describe Texas Central as a recipient of grants or a source of collateral or guarantees.

Now, therefore, be it hereby resolved that Texas Central, in addition, will:

1. As long as it is reasonable and prudent, continue to incur costs associated with the planning and positioning of its Houston station such that it can accommodate connectivity with other intermodal transportation connections under active consideration for construction, financing and implementation.
2. Not accept public grants for its planned North Texas to Houston service.
3. Participate in planning performed by H-GAC, METRO, TxDOT, City of Houston, and others to facilitate multi-modal connections between the Houston Terminal Station, the region's major activity centers, and major transportation corridors.

Signed and adopted by:

Alan Clark, Director of Transportation
Houston-Galveston Area Council

Date

Tim Keith, Chief Executive Officer
Texas Central Partners, LLC

Date